

CHAPTER III.

THE PLANTATION OF PENACOOK.—ITS TRANSITION TO THE TOWNSHIP OF RUMFORD.

1726–1734.

The committee's report, mentioned in the preceding chapter, as adopted by the legislative authorities of Massachusetts, January 17, 1726, served as letters-patent for the plantation or incipient township of Penacook. It "assigned and set apart" territory prescribed "to contain seven miles square, and to begin where Contoocook river falls into Merrimack, and thence to extend upon a course east seventeen degrees north, three miles, and upon a course west seventeen degrees south, four miles, to be the northerly bounds of the said township; and from the extreme parts of that line, to be set off southerly at right angles, until seven miles shall be accomplished from the said north bounds."

It "ordered that the Hon. William Tailer, Esq., Elisha Cooke, Esq., Spencer Phipps, Esq., William Dudley, Esq., John Wainwright, Esq., Capt. John Shipley, Mr. John Saunders, Eleazer Tyng, Esq., and Mr. Joseph Wilder, be a committee to take special care that the following rules and conditions be punctually observed and kept: . . . That the . . . land be . . . divided into one hundred and three equal . . . shares, as to quantity and quality, and that one hundred persons or families be admitted,—such only as, in the judgment of the committee shall be well able to pursue and bring to pass their several settlements . . . within . . . three years, at farthest, from the first day of June next; that each . . . intended settler, to whom a lot . . . shall be assigned, shall pay into the hands of the Committee, for the use of the Province, at the time of drawing his lot, the sum of five pounds, and be obliged to build a good dwelling-house, . . . and also break up and sufficiently fence in six acres of land for" his "home lot, within the time aforesaid; that the first fifty settlements shall be begun and perfected upon the eastern side of said river Merrimack, and the houses erected on their home [house] lots, not above twenty rods, the one from the other,—where the land will possibly admit thereof,—in the most regular and defensible manner, the committee . . . can project and order—the home lots on each

side of the river, to be alike subjected unto the above-mentioned conditions; that a convenient house for the public worship of God be completely finished within the term aforesaid; that there shall be reserved, allotted, and laid out to the first minister that shall be lawfully settled among them, one full . . . share . . . of the aforesaid tract of land . . . : his house lot to be . . . adjoining the land whereon the meeting-house shall stand; also one other . . . share . . . for the use of the school forever, and one other ministerial lot, of equal value with the rest—the home lot appertaining thereto, affixed near the meeting-house.” The report further provided, “that, . . . when . . . there shall be one hundred persons accepted . . . by the committee, . . . it shall be lawful . . . to notify the undertakers to meet at some convenient time and place; who, when assembled, shall make such necessary rules and orders as to them shall be thought most conducive for carrying forward and effecting the aforesaid settlement— . . . three fourths . . . of the persons present . . . consenting—and two or more of the committee being present at such meeting, who shall enter into a fair book, to be kept for such purpose, all rules, orders, and directions agreed on as aforesaid . . . ; the whole charge of the committee to be paid by the settlers;” and, finally, “that when” the settlers “shall have performed the conditions above expressed, provided it be within the space of three years, as before limited, then the committee, for and in behalf of this Court, may execute good and sufficient deeds . . . to all such settlers, . . . with a saving of all or any former grant or grants.”

Such were the provisions made by the General Court of Massachusetts, for the planting of Penacook, “in a good, regular, and defensible manner.” These provisions were carried out, with such exceptions as will be noted. The Court’s Committee of Nine, with William Taler for its president, and John Wainwright for its clerk, faithfully and strictly watched over the settlement during its early years; and it now comes in order to trace, mainly from the records of that committee and those of the proprietors, the evolution of the town.¹

The petitioners had been waiting four years not without apprehension that the lands at Penacook might fall into the hands of the “Irish People,” or those of others. The court’s committee met on the 18th of January, 1726,—next day after the adoption of the report making the grant,—and, having organized, made arrangements for holding a meeting on the second day of February, “at the house of

¹ The direct citations from the records will be carefully denoted by quotation marks.

Ebenezer Eastman, inn-holder, in Haverhill," to "treat with . . . the petitioners . . . for a tract of land at PennyCook." During the four days' session of the meeting accordingly held, one hundred persons were admitted as settlers, after the most careful inquiry "as to their character and their ability to fulfil the conditions."¹ In this examination, the committee summoned officially "some of the principal inhabitants of the towns, to which the generality of the petitioners belonged, to give information of the circumstances of" those desirous of admission, so that only such might be selected "as" should "be thought most suitable for bringing forward the intended settlement." The enrolment was completed on Saturday, the 5th of February, 1725-'26, and each person thus admitted "paid twenty shillings to the chairman to defray the charges of the committee."²

At once, sixty-eight of the admitted settlers, wishing to save the trouble and expense of a journey of the committee to and from Boston, and also being earnest for "the greatest expedition" in their enterprise, made written request to the committee to notify "the community" to appear at the house of Ebenezer Eastman, on the next Monday, February 7th, "to make . . . rules and orders . . . most conducive for bringing forward" the intended settlement. At the meeting held in accordance with the request, it was "agreed and ordered," that a settler, who should "fail of plowing, fencing, or clearing one acre of land within twelve months from the first day of June next," should "forfeit to the community the sum of five pounds;" that, in case of such failure for two years, and of "having a sufficiency of timber felled, hauled, and adapted for building a house within six months after the direction of the committee of the general court," a forfeiture of "ten pounds" should ensue; that if any should fail "to comply with the directions enjoined him" . . . , for "two years and a half from the first day of June next," he should forfeit his "lot," which should be assigned to any other person, selected by the settlers, with the consent of the court's committee; and that no sale "of any lot" should "be made without the consent of the community," and that any attempted sale in violation of the order should be "void" and work forfeiture. This last provision had strong reference to the Scotch-Irish immigrants with whom it was then thought not desirable to have association. The restriction had, at the outset, been urged upon the committee, in a letter, by Reverend Christopher Toppan of Newbury, a son and a nephew of whom became grantees.

On the same occasion, the court's committee provided for "two

¹ Bouton's Concord, 59.

² See list of admitted settlers at close of chapter.

surveyors and four chainmen to attend upon the next adjournment," for allotting the land into one hundred and three equal shares. An adjournment was taken to the 5th of April, when the committee were to "meet at the house of Colonel Tyng,¹ in Dunstable, in order to proceed to PennyCook, to lay out the land in lots." Colonel Tyng was also to be requested "to prepare fifteen days' provisions for twenty men"; and "the intended settlers" were to be "notified that each of them" was "expected and directed to pay forty shillings" towards "defraying the charge of the committee—the money to be ready at Colonel Tyng's on or before the 5th day of April." Delayed, however, by engagements in the General Court, the committee could not proceed, at the time indicated, to allot the lands at Pennycook, and this duty was deferred till the second Tuesday of May.

Meanwhile the authorities of New Hampshire had been awake to these movements of Massachusetts. On the 23d of February, 1726, a month after the passage of the "order of the General Court for the opening of a new town at Pennicook," Lieutenant-Governor Wentworth,¹ of New Hampshire, addressed a letter to Lieutenant-Governor Dummer,¹ of Massachusetts, "complaining of the order, and suggesting that Pennicook" was "within the Province of New Hampshire."² The communication having been laid before the council, the opinion was expressed, on the 5th of March, that the suggestion of encroachment "on the bounds of New Hampshire" was "altogether groundless; for the committee impowered to lay out the township," could "not by that vote extend, above three miles northerly from the river Merrimack, or any part thereof, for the north bounds of the said township."³ The next month, April 11, 1726, Lieutenant-Governor Wentworth sounded a warning note, in a message to the General Assembly, and in the following earnest words: "The Massachusetts are daily encroaching on us. A late instance we have, in voting a township should be erected and settled at Pennycook, which will certainly be in the very bowels of this Province, and which will take in the most valuable part of our lands. I would, therefore, recommend this matter to your mature consideration. . . . I have lately represented this affair to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, and have transmitted the best and exactest draught of this Province, Merrimack river, and situation of Pennicook, to their Lordships, praying their favor in obtaining a settlement of the lines, [and] giving instances wherein it highly concerns the interest of the Crown."

On the last day of April the house and council concurred in order-

¹ See note at close of chapter.

² N. H. State Papers, Vol. XXIV, 43-4.

³ *Ibid.*, 44-5.

ing instructions to Mr. Henry Newman, agent in London, "to prosecute . . . speedy settlement of the lines," inasmuch as Massachusetts had "lately disposed of considerable tracts of land . . . reasonably supposed to be within the bounds of New Hampshire, and" was "about granting more of said lands, which" was "a very great grievance."¹ The council, on the 10th of May, hearing "that sundry persons" were "going or gone to lay out and take possession of and settle upon some of His Majesty's lands . . . at or near a place called Pennecook, without the consent" of the New Hampshire "government," pronounced the act to be "not only unneighborly, but unjustifiable, and" having "a tendency to the destroying of the mast trees fit for His Majesty's service, that" might "be growing thereon." Accordingly, it was ordered that "Messrs. Nathaniel Weare, Theodore Atkinson, and Richard Waldron, jr., repair immediately to Pennecook, and forewarn any persons whom they" might "find there" against "laying out, taking possession of, or settling" on, the lands at or near that place, "or presuming to appropriate any other of His Majesty's lands within" the province of New Hampshire, "till they" should "have the countenance and grant of" the government of that province, "for so doing;" and "to direct them, in an amicable way, forthwith to withdraw—from the land, and their pretensions to it by virtue of the . . . vote of the General Assembly of Massachusetts."²

The same day on which this action was taken by the New Hampshire authorities, the committee of the General Court of Massachusetts "met at the house of Ebenezer Eastman," in Haverhill, with the purpose of proceeding thence to Penacook, "to lay out there a new township of seven miles square, and on each side of the Merrimack river."³ After completing preliminary arrangements, six of the nine members,—Messrs. William Taler, John Wainwright, John Shipley, Eleazer Tyng, John Sanders and Joseph Wilder,—on Thursday, May 12th, set out upon "their journey to PennyCook, attended by twenty-six persons, including the surveyors, chainmen, and such of the intended settlers as were disposed to take a view of the lands." Starting early in the morning, the company arrived, about noon "at Nutfield alias Londonderry," where they "refreshed themselves and horses with" their own provisions at the house of one John Barr, an Irish tavern-keeper, but had nothing of him but small beer; the expenses . . . at the house" being "5 shillings." Thence their course led them, for three or four hours, along "a cart path" which

¹ N. H. Prov. Papers, Vol. IV, 220.

² *Ibid.*, 11, 12.

³ Journal of Jno. Wainwright (Bouton's Concord, 64). The quoted portions of the succeeding narrative of the committee's journey and proceedings are from that journal.

afforded "very indifferent travelling," and involved the fording of "two brooks . . . called Great and Little, which," proceeding "from Great MassaBeseck and Little MassaBeseck Ponds,—empty themselves into the Merrimack." Having "arrived at a place called Amoskeeg Falls," they "there encamped that night." There, too, they "found several Irish people catching fish which that place" afforded "in great abundance." Proceeding "on" their "journey," the next morning, over "very hilly and mountainous land," they "passed" about eight o'clock "by a Fall, in Merrimack river, called Onnahook-line,¹ from a hill of the same name." About an hour later they "forded a pretty deep brook—and soon after came upon a large tract of intervale land, joining to Suncook river." This they forded in course of the forenoon, finding it "a rapped stream" with "many loose stones of some considerable bigness in it, making it difficult to pass." One of the "men going over, having a heavy load on his horse, was thrown off into the river and lost "one of the bags of provisions"—there being "no time to look after it." Another of their "men fell into the river," but without serious consequence. Finding there "Benjamin Niccols and Ebenezer Virgin,—two intended settlers," whom "Colonel Tyng" had "sent up ahead with some stores," the journeyers, early in the afternoon, "passed PennyCook river,—alias Shew Brook, or SowCook,—pretty deep and very rocky" and into which "one of" their "men tumbled. A short time after," they reached "PennyCook Falls,"² . . . and then," steering their course north, "travelled over a large pitch pine plain, (indifferent land), three miles at least in length, . . . and, about five o'clock afternoon, arrived at PennyCook, and encamped on a piece of intervale land, or plain, called Sugar Ball Plain;" having taken "its name from a very high head, or hill, called Sugar Ball Hill, whereon was the first Indian fort,—as" they "were informed,—which the Indians in old times built to defend themselves from the Maquois and others, their enemies. This Sugar Ball plain," they found to be "a pretty large tract of land, encompassed on all parts,—" except "where the river runs round it,—with very high and mountainous land, as steep as the roof of house"; and that "it" was "altogether impracticable for a team, or, indeed, a horse cart, to get on the plain, the land" was "so mountainous round it; and there" was "no spring on it, as" they "could find." At this point, the record adds: "Just as we were making up our camp, there came up a smart thunder shower, and we had enough to do to save our bread from the rain."

Early on the morning of May 14th the committee "got together

¹ Hooksett.

² Garvin's.

the surveyors and chainmen, and set them to survey the township according to the General Court's order. Mr. Jonas Houghton, Surveyor," and "Jonathan Shipley, Josiah Cop, Moses Hazzen, and Benjamin Niccolls, chainmen, being first sworn truly and faithfully to discharge their duty and trust in taking the survey, were sent to run the line of the township, according to the Court's grant; to begin on the east side of the river, where the Contoocook falls into the Merrimack. Mr. Josiah Bacheldor, Surveyor" and "Ens. John Chandler and" another, "chainmen, being first duly sworn, were appointed to survey the intervale on the east side of the river; and Mr. Richard Hazzen, Junr, Surveyor," with John Ayer and John Sanders, Jr., chainmen, to survey the interval on the west side of the Merrimack. To the service designated the parties had severally proceeded when about noon, "Messrs. Nathaniel Weare, Richard Waldron, Jr., and Theodore Atkinson, a committee appointed by the Lieut Governor and Council of New-Hampshire, came up to camp,—being attended by about half a score of Irishmen, who kept some distance from the camp." These gentlemen "acquainted us," says the record, "that the Government of New-Hampshire, being informed of our business here, had sent them to desire us that we would not proceed in appropriating these lands to any private or particular persons, for they lay in their government; and our government's making a grant might be attended with very ill consequences to the settlers when it appeared the lands fell in New-Hampshire's government;—and then they delivered a copy of an order passed by their Honours the Lieut. Governor and Council of New-Hampshire, respecting the settling of the land at PennyCook. . . . We made them answer, that the government of Massachusetts Bay had sent us to lay the lands here into a township; that they had made a grant of it to some particular men, and that we should proceed to do the business we were come upon, and made no doubt but our government would be always ready to support and justify their own grants; and that it was the business of the public, and not ours, to engage in . . . to determine any controversy about the lands. We sent our salutes to the Lieut. Governor of New-Hampshire, and the gentlemen took their leave of us, and went homeward this afternoon. The surveyors and chainmen returned to us in safety about sundown."

The next day, May 15th, being the Sabbath,—“fair and cool,”—the chaplain of the party, Mr. Enoch Coffin, a grantee, “performed divine service both parts of the day.”¹ And so, on that plain just awakening to vernal beauty beneath the skies of May, those pioneers in an enterprise germinant with promise of good, sought the divine

¹ See note at close of chapter.

favor by joining in that initial act of public worship, which, by repetition, should bless, in all coming years, the life and growth of plantation, town, and city.

In course of the next three days the work of running the lines and surveying the interval on both sides of the river was completed. Mr. Batchelder, in surveying on the east side, found that "Gov. Endicott's grant of five hundred acres—, claimed by the Honorable Judge Sewall, . . . consisted principally of interval land: and that the grant extended down the river within eighty poles of the place where the Irish people had lately built a fort; so that there remained but a small quantity of interval, which would accommodate not half a score [of] home lots." Accordingly no lots were "laid out on that side of the river." On the west side, however, "Mr. Hazen and company" succeeded, with some difficulty, in laying out "the home lots" agreeably to the General Court's order, by locating them "on the Great Interval over against Sugar Ball Plain, and the land next adjoining; . . . having made a beginning on the adjoining upland." But they "found it impracticable, if not impossible, to lay out the land there into six acre lots so as to be fenced and broken up within three years; the contents being too large, wholly to be laid out there."

So the work was accomplished during the bright days of May—for the weather was "fair," "fair and cool," "fair and pleasant," "fine and clear," as Wainwright's lively record duly noted; while the surveyors, chainmen, and companions, as they threaded the virgin growths of the wilderness, found some excitement in coming upon an occasional "beaver" or "hedgehog," or "divers rattlesnakes" that "were killed daily;—but," in the fervent language of the journal, "thanks be to God, nobody received any harm from them." The sum of two hundred pounds defrayed the charges incurred in this important preliminary to the civilized occupation of Penacook.

The committee made report, the next month, to the General Court of Massachusetts, setting forth that, "on the east side of the Merrimack," they found "little or no water, [and] the land near the river extremely mountainous, and almost impassable, and very unfit for and incapable of receiving fifty families, as the Court" had "ordered; more especially," as, "near the center of the town, on the east side of the river Merrimack, the Honorable Samuel Sewall, Esq.," had "a farm of five hundred acres of good land formerly . . . laid out to Gov. Endicott:" and "that, therefore, . . . one hundred and three lots of land" had been "laid out for settlements, on the west side, contiguous to each other, regularly and in a defensible manner

. . . .” In conclusion the committee humbly offered, that “inasmuch as the generality of the land” did not answer “the grantees’ expectation,” and “five hundred acres” had been laid out before, a grant of “the like number of acres of the unappropriated lands adjacent to the township” should “be made to the settlers as an equivalent.” The General Court at once accepted the committee’s report so far as to allow the settlements to be made on the west side of the river; but no action was taken at that time upon the request for a grant of land equivalent to the Sewall Farm.

Immediately upon the return to Portsmouth, on the 15th of May, the New Hampshire committee—Messrs. Weare, Waldron, and Atkinson—reported to the lieutenant-governor and council, that they had been “at Pennecook,” where they “found his Hon. Col. Will. Tailer, Esq., John Wainwright, Esq., and Col. Eleazer Tyng, Esq., with sundry others, mostly unknown to” them, “to the number of near forty men, who were felling the trees and laying out the lands there.” “Whereupon,”—the report continues,—“we presented the order of Court, and assured them that their proceedings were highly displeasing to the government which sent us thither, and their persisting therein would be at their peril, for they might depend upon it, when the controversial boundary between the two Provinces should be determined, the poor misled people who might be induced to settle there under the color of a Massachusetts grant, would be dispossessed of the said lands, or suffer some other inconveniences equally grievous; and that the message on which we were sent, and the fair forewarning they had by us, would take away all occasions of complaint when they should be compelled to leave the said lands, and lose the benefit of their improvement. To which the gentlemen above-mentioned were pleased to reply, that, as we were sent by the government of New-Hampshire, so were they, by the government of Massachusetts, and that when they returned home, they” would “lay before their General Assembly, the order of Council we had delivered them, who, without doubt, would pass thereon as they . . . should think proper.”¹

The council of Massachusetts took notice of this forewarning, by passing an order, on the 28th of June, that a letter be sent to “Mr. Agent Dummer” in London, instructing him “to take effective care to answer any complaint” that the New Hampshire government might make against the grant of Penacook “lately made.” On the other hand, Mr. Henry Newman, having “received letters” from the New Hampshire authorities, “complaining of the encroachment of Massachusetts Province,” addressed, on the 8th of August, an urgent

¹ 1 N. H. Prov. Papers, Vol. IV, 12.

communication to the "Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations," informing them that he had "some time since lodged in the Council office, to be laid before His Majesty, a memorial requesting that the boundaries of" those "provinces" might "be settled"; and begging their "Lordships," that, "as that" might "require time to be considered," they "would be pleased, in the meanwhile, to interpose" their "authority for securing His Majesty's interest in the Province of New-Hampshire from any detriment by the grants already made; and for suspending all grants of land on or near the boundaries in dispute, till His Majesty's pleasure therein" should "be known."¹

The summer and autumn of 1726 passed, but the admitted settlers had not yet drawn their lands by allotment. They had met the court's committee, on the 7th of September, at the house or inn of Francis Crumpton, in Ipswich, "to draw their respective lots," as specified in the call for the meeting, but, from the lack of some preparations deemed requisite by the committee, especially the cutting of a road from Haverhill to the intended settlement, they did not then receive the expected allotment. However, they "came into certain orders and rules for bringing forward and effecting the settlement," which were put into the hands of the committee. They chose Captain Benjamin Stevens, treasurer, to receive the balance of money paid the court's committee by the settlers, after defraying the committee's charges; this balance "to be disposed of in marking out and clearing a way to PennyCook." They appointed "Ensign John Chandler, of Andover, John Ayer, of Haverhill, and Mr. William Barker, of Andover, a committee to go out and clear a sufficient cart-way to PennyCook, the nighest and best way, from Haverhill"; the expense to be "defrayed by the community." They also ordered "Mr. Obadiah Ayer to make application to the General Court," . . . in their behalf, "to have the five hundred pounds abated, and the five hundred acres,—being the equivalent for Mr. Sewall's farm, added to the township." Moreover, they completed their payment of twenty shillings each, for making up the hundred pounds, ordered by the committee to be raised for defraying the expense of "laying out a way to the settlement."

During the autumn the committee on the "cart-way" were engaged in the duty assigned them, with the help of Richard Hazzen, who went "to search out and mark" a path by way of "Chester" to "PennyCook." This new road, thus selected and "cut through," was a more direct and otherwise better one than that taken by the committee in May, as already described. It kept farther to the east

¹ Original in office of secretary of state; Bouton's Concord, 82.

from the Merrimack, without deflections towards it at the several falls. It passed up through the Chester woods, including those of modern Hooksett; and having skirted along "White Hall" and the eastern edge of "Lakin's Pond"¹ it reached the Suncook. From the ford at the site of the present village which bears the river's name, the path ran northward for a portion of its distance, over the course of the later thoroughfare, known as "Pembroke Street," onward to the ford of the Soucook,² and thence beyond to Sugar Ball; whence was passage by boat to the west bank of the Merrimack.

In course of the summer and autumn some of the admitted settlers were on the ground, and made hay upon the tempting intervals on the west side of the river, stacking it for the future use of "the community."² It seems also that two of them at least—Henry Rolfe and Richard Urann—spent the ensuing winter, or a part of it, in Penacook, and hence it is sometimes claimed that they were the first settlers.³ It is said that the winter of 1726-'27 was one of unusual cold and depth of snow, and that these hardy pioneers suffered not a little from the severity of the season and lack of provisions, but were relieved by the kindly services of friendly Indians, who still lingered in the home of their fathers.⁴

Towards the close of winter, on the 7th and 8th of February, 1727, a meeting of the court's committee and the admitted settlers was held at the house of Benjamin Stevens in Andover. "A bond of five pounds" was taken from each settler, "for the payment of five hundred pounds for the use" of the province of Massachusetts, when the General Court should "demand the same; on penalty of forfeiting title . . . to the lands respectively." The settlers, having complied with this condition, as well as that of opening, at their own charge, a cart-way from Haverhill to Penacook, were allowed to draw their allotments of land.

Each allotment consisted of a "House Lot" and a "Home, or Six Acre, Lot"; the former containing an acre and a half; the latter, six acres, more or less, according to quality. There were one hundred and three allotments, being those of the hundred admitted settlers, and three others—the "minister's," the "ministerial," and the "school,"⁵ all laid out upon the west side of the river. The "house-lots" were laid off in ranges. The first range ran along on the east side of a highway-space, ten rods wide,—afterwards to be contracted

¹ In modern Hooksett. History of Pembroke, 94-95.

² See note at close of chapter.

³ Annals of Concord, 11 (note).

⁴ Bouton's Concord, 83.

⁵ At the close of this chapter will be found an alphabetical list of the proprietors, with the house- and home-lots drawn by each in their respective ranges. This is accompanied by a plan, by the aid of which the description in the text may be more easily understood. See Bouton's Concord, 122, 123, 124, with plan.

to a width of six rods, known as Main street,—and extended from Horse Shoe pond hill, or “the minister’s lot,”¹ southward about a mile and a half. This range contained thirty-seven lots, regularly numbered from north to south, with the sixth and thirty-fifth vacant. Parallel to this, and along the west side of the same thoroughfare, and extending about the same distance, was the second range, containing thirty-four lots, numbered in the same direction as those of the first, with the thirtieth vacant. Westward of the second, and separated from it by a highway-space ten rods wide, being a part of what was to be State street, was the third range, which ran southerly to the present Washington street, from a highway reservation, extending westerly from Horse Shoe pond hill. It contained twelve lots, numbered from north to south in continuation of those in the second range, with the thirty-ninth vacant. A short range, perpendicular to the northernmost lots of the third range, extended westward, and contained the school lot with three others. These four lots were not numbered in the record, and took, it seems, the place of the vacant ones in the other ranges. The “Island Range” lay along the highland on the west side of Horse Shoe pond, and reached northward to Wood’s brook. It comprised nine “house lots,” numbered from south to north, which had their accompanying “home lots” on “Horse Shoe Island” near by, a fact that gave the range its name.

As has been seen, with these one hundred and three “House Lots” went the same number of “Home, or Six Acre, Lots,”—the latter generally detached from the former, though the minister’s allotment had the two contiguous. The eleven allotments of the portion of land variously styled “The Lowest Range,” “The Lowest Intervale,” or “The Eleven Lots,” extending northward from “The Great Bend” of the river nearly to the southern extremities of the first and second house-lot ranges, already described, had the peculiarity of being, each, a combination of “house-lot” and “home-lot,” and of being designated exclusively by the latter name. Of the other “home-lots,” ten lay in “Wattannummon’s Field,” to the northward of Horse Shoe pond, and southward of the Merrimack, as it there flows; seventy-two in “The Great Plain,” comprising all the interval northeast and east of the first range of “house-lots,” and between “Wattannummon’s Field” and the “Frog Ponds”—the latter designating an area embraced by the river’s curve north of “The Eleven Lots”; and, lastly, ten on Horse Shoe Island. Through these lots, highways—some four rods wide, others two—were here and there reserved.

Thus, the allotments that had been surveyed and laid out in May,

¹ See note at close of chapter.

1726, came at last, in February, 1727, into the hands of individual proprietors. Each "admitted settler" had now his little farm of upland and interval, with the assurance of future enlargement of possession out of lands yet unallotted; and in this freehold tenure he was to find a natural stimulus to the earnest exertion requisite to accomplish the civilized occupation of the wilderness.

As soon as the settlers had drawn their land they held a meeting, February 8, 1727, and voted to build "at Pennycook, a block-house of twenty-five feet in breadth and forty feet in length, for the security of the settlers"; John Chandler, Moses Hazzen, Nehemiah Carlton, Nathan Simonds, and Ebenezer Stevens being a committee to examine the charges arising from "building a block-house, . . . or any other charges, that" should "arise in bringing forward the settlement," and, upon allowance, "to draw money out of the treasury," for payment. They levied a tax of one hundred pounds to "be paid in to the treasurer by the first day" of the succeeding March, "for defraying past and future charges." They appointed John Chandler, Henry Rolfe, William White, Richard Hazzen, Jr., and John Osgood, "to lay out the intervale that" had "not yet" been "laid out," so that the "whole,"—including the part already laid out,—should "be equally divided among" the settlers, "as to quantity and quality." While adopting promptly such wise measures, they thought it not premature to declare a war of extermination against the venomous reptile, already found to be dangerously prevalent in the Penacook woods, by providing a bounty of "threepence" for every "rattlesnake killed within the bounds of the township, to be paid by the settlers' treasurer upon sight of the tail."¹

The "Second Division of the Intervale," ordered at this meeting, was surveyed and laid out in May, 1727, by the committee appointed for that purpose,—Richard Hazzen, Jr., being the surveyor,—and was accepted by the court's committee in March, 1728.²

The division comprised, on the east side of the river: (1) The "Mill Brook Intervale," or the lands in the vicinity of Mill brook, the outlet of Turtle pond into the Merrimack, lying in two ranges—the first containing twenty-four lots, the second, twelve. (2) The "Sugar Ball Division," situated in the valley south of Sugar Ball hill, and containing sixteen lots. (3) "The Middle Plain," including the interval extending from Sugar Ball plain to the river's curve at the "Frog Ponds," and being in twenty-eight lots, numbered,—as were all those hitherto mentioned,—down Merrimack river. (4) The east-side "Lowest Intervale," opposite the "Eleven Lots," extending from the ancient south line of the plantation, northward to the "Mid-

¹ See note at close of chapter.

² Bouton's Concord, 85.

dle Plain"; being in thirty-one lots, numbered up the river, and with "a driftway of three rods through" their "westerly" ends, "as nigh the Merrimack river as" might be convenient.

This second division included, on the west side of the Merrimack: (1) "Rattlesnake Plains," comprising the interval reaching northward from "Farnum's Eddy to the hills and bluffs which border the river, northeast of West Parish village,"¹ in seventeen lots, numbered up river, and with allowance for a highway. (2) "The Frog Ponds,"—already often mentioned,—south of "The Great Plain," and divided into sixteen lots.

In addition, nine small lots not in range were laid out in various localities.² Those persons whose allotments, in the first division, had fallen in the "Eleven Lots," obtained, in the second, the same number of lots opposite in the "Lowest Intervale" on the east side of the river, and also eleven others in the "Middle Plain."³ In some other cases, "two parcels, in different localities, were allotted to the same person."⁴ The number of lots in the second division was one hundred and sixty-seven; and these, exclusive of the nine scattered ones, varied in size from two and a half acres to six.⁵



The Meeting-house.

In the early spring of 1727, nearly a year before the second assignment of lands was completed, the settlers had gone to work in the plantation. By April and May a pioneer band of proprietors, comprising Ebenezer Eastman, Joseph and Edward Abbott, John Merrill, and forty or fifty others, including employees, had arrived, and at once engaged "in building the meeting-

house, in clearing and fencing lots," and in other labors incident to the beginning of a permanent settlement.⁶ The "meeting-house"—

¹ Bouton's Concord, 86.

² *Ibid.*, 127.

³ The allotments of the second division are tabulated at the close of this chapter, with quantity of land, locality, and names of owners. No plan is to be found. See notes at close of chapter. See Bouton's Concord, 125-27.

⁴ Depositions of Richard Hazzen, Joseph and Edward Abbot, and others in the Bow controversy, cited in Bouton's Concord, 210-11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

otherwise denominated the "block house," or the "garrison house"—was the first building to be reared, and was early completed for use. It was a modest structure of hewn logs, newly felled in the primeval forest where it was placed. Its length was forty feet, and its width twenty-five. Its roof was low-ridged, and without chimney or tower. Its door opened midway the length, and unglazed port-hole windows pierced the sides. The exterior of the structure, in its solidity without beauty, was matched by an interior of rude finish and scanty furnishing. It stood in the second range of house-lots, on the west side of the main highway, by an eastward-flowing brook, not then named "West's," and where, in after years, was to be the northwest corner of Main and Chapel streets. With repairs and "amendments," it was to answer its purposes, religious and secular,—in other words, as a church and a town house, for nearly a quarter of a century.

During the season, some of the uplands were put in process of clearing, and portions of the interval were plowed and planted with Indian corn, while the native grass was cured into hay. It is asserted that Samuel Ayer, a young proprietor, was the first to plow "a field in Penacook." House-lots were prepared to receive the home buildings of hewn logs. Indeed, Ebenezer Eastman, a veteran of the Port Royal and Canadian expeditions of fifteen years before and now a leading spirit in this plantation enterprise, had his house ready for occupation in the fall of 1727, and there resided with his wife, Sarah Peaslee, and his six sons—Ebenezer, Philip, Joseph, Nathaniel, Jeremiah, and Obadiah—the first family of settlers resident in Penacook.¹ The house-lot where was then the Eastman home, was the ninth in the second range of the original survey, not far south of the angle made by the modern Franklin street with the main thoroughfare. But in the second division of lots, early the next year, Captain Eastman received the sixteenth lot in the "Mill Brook range," on the east side of the river, and there he finally settled. It seems from tradition that Captain Eastman's team of six yoke of oxen, with a cart, accompanying the removal of his family to their new home, was the first outfit of the kind to pass over the road lately cut "through the wilderness," from Haverhill to Penacook.² The outfit proving somewhat unwieldy, found difficulty along the route, but especially towards the end, where, at precipitous Sugar Ball, the driver, Jacob Shute, afterwards a settler in the plantation, could secure a safe descent into the plain bordering the river, only by felling a pine tree and chaining it top foremost to the cart.³

¹ Bouton's Concord, 90; Annals of Concord, 11 (note).

² Bouton's Concord, 88; Annals of Concord, 11 (note).

³ *Ibid.*; also, see notes at close of chapter.

The arrival of Captain Eastman's family was probably soon followed by that of others. Certainly, Edward Abbott and his wife, Dorcas Chandler, passed the ensuing winter in the settlement. Possibly they dwelt upon the lot, marked by the junction of the present Main and Montgomery streets, where they surely dwelt some years later.¹ However that may be, to the worthy pair was born, on the 15th of February, 1728, a daughter, to whom was given the mother's name, and who was the first white child born in Penacook. It was not till nearly two years later that the first male child, Edward Abbott, was born in the plantation and of the same parents.

Now, of the work of settlement, thus successfully pushed in the plantation established by Massachusetts, the government of New Hampshire was not an idle spectator. On the 20th of May, 1727, it granted—"as it is believed without actual survey"²—the townships of Bow, Canterbury, Chichester, and Epsom. The grant of Bow, to one hundred and seven proprietors and "their associates," comprised eighty-one square miles, and covered about three fourths of the plantation of Penacook, and much adjoining territory on the south and southwest. This action was taken with a view to the practical enforcement of the warning given in May of the previous year, to the committee of the General Court of Massachusetts, then engaged in laying off the lands in Penacook. New Hampshire was determined to resist, pending the settlement of the boundary line between the two provinces, the claim of Massachusetts to the possession of all lands to the southward of the line three miles "northward of the Merrimack from mouth to source." The grant of Bow involved mischief to the Massachusetts settlers of Penacook, for there was to come of it to them a long, vexatious, and injurious controversy, the history of which belongs to a period twenty-five years later.

The next year (1728), at a meeting of the settlers, called at their "desire" by the court's committee, and held, on the 6th and 7th of March, at the house of John Griffin, in Bradford, an appropriation was voted to discharge accounts for "laying out the second division of intervale, for building the block-house, making canoes," and for other purposes. A committee, consisting of Ebenezer Eastman, Joseph Hall, and Abraham Foster, was appointed "to amend the new way from PennyCook to Haverhill." The same committee had in charge "to fence in," by the last day of May, "all the first division of intervale"; each proprietor having the choice "to fence in his proportion, or else to pay the committee for doing it."

¹ On or near the site of the residence of the late Eliphalet S. Nutter.

² Bouton's Concord, 206 (note).

At this meeting action was also taken towards securing the regular preaching of the gospel. Accordingly, Joseph Hall and John Pecker "were empowered to agree with a minister to preach at PennyCook, the year ensuing; to begin the service from the fifteenth day of May." The committee received also injunction "to act with all prudence, and not assure the gentleman more than the rate of one hundred pounds per annum for his services."

Other business of a financial character, or connection, having been transacted, as, ordering one hundred pounds to be raised "for defraying past and future charges"; appointing collectors "to demand and receive, and, if need be, sue for and recover in the law," arrearages on sums previously raised; making appropriations to individuals for services rendered, and choosing Deacon John Osgood, treasurer, the meeting was continued by adjournment to the 15th of May, then to be held "at the block-house in Penny-Cook."

At this adjourned meeting,—the first of the kind held by the settlers on the soil of their new plantation, and the earliest forerunner of "Concord town-meetings,"—Captain Henry Rolfe was moderator, with John Wainwright, of the court's committee, clerk. The progress of the settlement was evinced in the appointment of Henry Rolfe, Ebenezer Eastman, and James Mitchell, as a committee, to procure the building of a sawmill within six months, "to supply the town with good merchantable boards of yellow pine, at thirty shillings per thousand, and . . . white pine boards at forty shillings per thousand—or to saw of each sort to the halves"; and also "to agree with some person or persons to erect a grist-mill," within a year, and "to oblige the builder or builders to grind the town's corn of all sorts, well and free from grit, for the usual toll." It was further provided that "fifty pounds of bills of credit" should be paid, and "fifty acres of land" granted for building each of the mills, and that the builders should "be entitled to the said lands and also to the stream or streams upon which the mills" stood, "so long as they" were "kept in repair, and the design of the town in having them built" was "answered"; this title to hold good, if the mills should be "providentially consumed." As already seen, provision had been made for canoes to navigate the river; but now another advance was made in taking steps towards a more effective mode of crossing the stream by authorizing Ebenezer Eastman, Abraham Foster, and Joseph Hall, "to agree with some person to keep a ferry on Merrimack river," and "to clear the best way they" could "to the ferry-place"; the ferriage to be sixpence for "each man and horse," and fourpence "for each horned beast."

The settlers, thus busily intent upon advancing the interests of their

plantation, received, on the 6th of August, 1728, from the legislature of Massachusetts, upon a petition presented by John Osgood, permission "to extend the south bounds of the township one hundred rods, the full breadth of the town," as an equivalent for the five hundred acres formerly laid out to the right of Governor Endicott,—otherwise the Sewall Farm. On the same day, and by the same legislature, was granted to the volunteers under Captain Lovewell, a portion of the wilderness to the southward, six miles square, and named Suncook, described as "lying on each side of the Merrimack," and "of the same breadth from the river as Pennicook," and "beginning where Pennicook new grant determines." The territory of Suncook was largely included in that of Bow. As New Hampshire had, the year before, laid the township of Bow over the greater part of Penacook, so Massachusetts now laid the greater part of Suncook over Bow. Such territorial overlapping—such a shingling of hostile grants, so to speak—was not conducive to peaceable occupation, as subsequent events were to attest.

As already mentioned, action had been taken by the settlers, early in the year, with a view to securing regular religious service. Little is known of the immediate result of that action. It is certain, however, that Reverend Enoch Coffin and Reverend Bezaliel Toppan, both proprietors, and both Harvard graduates, occasionally occupied the pulpit of the log meeting-house; for early the next year (1729) an allowance of four pounds was granted to the heirs of the former, and thirty shillings to the latter, "for preaching and performing divine service at PennyCook."¹ At the meetings of the settlers, held in May and June of 1729, the subject of "procuring a minister" was a prominent one. At the June meetings, a committee, enlarged from two to seven, and consisting of John Osgood, John Pecker, John Chandler, Ebenezer Eastman, Nathan Simonds, William Barker, and Joseph Hall, was appointed "to call and agree with some suitable person to be minister of the town of PennyCook," at a salary of "one hundred pounds per annum" to "be paid by the community." Another sum of "one hundred pounds" was "allowed to be paid out of the company's treasury as an encouragement to the first minister for settling as" such, "and taking pastoral charge." At the subsequent adjourned meeting in October, "every proprietor or intended settler" was assessed "in the sum of twenty shillings, towards the support of an orthodox minister, . . . for the current year." Though the permanent supply of preaching had not then been secured, yet it is probable that, in course of the year, Timothy Walker, of Woburn, a young man of twenty-four, and four years out of Harvard

¹ See note at close of chapter.

college, made his first appearance in the Penacook pulpit, and there continued his services, more or less constantly, until his "call" to the pastorate in 1730.

In those days, too, the attention of the settlers was steadily directed to providing suitable roads within the settlement, and the region to the southward which had been their home. To facilitate the crossing of the Soucook and Suncook rivers fell to them exclusively, in the absence of neighbors to share the labor and expense. As a westward branch of the original Haverhill road, a new path, also, had to be opened leading directly from the Soucook crossing to the southerly part of the main settlement growing up along the west bank of the Merrimack. Hence, in proprietors' meeting on the 6th of May (1729), William Barker, Timothy Johnson, and Nicholas White were instructed "to make a fordway over Sow-Cooke river, and clear a way thence to the Merrimack river against the Eleven Lots, at the charge of the community." Within a year, and to another committee, consisting of John Pecker, Ebenezer Stevens, and Abraham Bradley, was assigned the duty, "to amend and repair the necessary roads in Pennycook, and also, . . . to build a good bridge over Sow-Cook river, at the cost of the settlers"; being the first structure of its kind to span a Concord stream. At the time when the branch way to the Merrimack against the "Eleven Lots" was ordered to be cleared, Nehemiah Carlton was "desired, for the sum of ten pounds to build a ferry-boat, about nineteen feet long, and of suitable breadth, well timbered . . . well caulked, pitched, or turpented, and furnished fit to carry people and creatures." This was forthwith "to be delivered, with a pair of good and suitable oars, at PennyCook, for the use of the society." Already Henry Rolfe had built a "ferry-boat for the carrying of the community and company over the river Suncook," for which he was allowed five pounds. Carlton's boat was soon plying on the Merrimack, at the Eleven Lots; and in March, 1730, in accordance with the action of two years before, a ferry was definitely established at or near the former "ferry place." It was then decided that "John Merrill" should "have the ferry, with twenty acres of land near": the ferriage to be "two pence for a man, and four pence for a horse" or other "beast"; and, after twenty years, "one penny per man" of "the inhabitants of PennyCook," and "three pence" a head for "beasts." This ferry, which later bore the name of Butters's, had location at some distance to the northward of the place where, more than sixty years later, a bridge—ever after to be maintained—was to be built over the Merrimack. On the hillside towards the west, the ferryman's twenty acres were laid out; and there his house

stood near the lower end of the main thoroughfare, where has long been a parting of roads.¹

By 1729 "Mr. Simonds and company"—as designated in the record—had completed, on Mill brook, the first sawmill, and, half a mile below this, the first grist-mill, as provided for by the settlers the year before. The stones of the latter were taken from Rattlesnake hill;² the crank of the former was brought from Haverhill on horseback. Soon after the mill was put to use it was disabled by the breaking of this iron crank—with no blacksmith short of Haverhill. But necessity suggested relief. A forge of blazing pitch-pine knots having been extemporized, the broken member, splintered with beetle-rings and wedges, had its fracture so reduced, and so knit in a thorough weld, that it was almost as good a crank as ever.³ The inconvenience of having the nearest blacksmith shop fifty miles away must have been felt by the settlers in other instances than this. So the next year (1730), provision was made to secure the services of a resident smith, in the vote "that Mr. Cutting Noyes" should "have fifty acres of land: ten of which" were to "be laid out against Mr. Pecker's lot, . . . sixteen rods front, and extending back from the highway," ten rods;¹ while "the other forty acres" were "to be laid out in some of the other divisions: provided" he should "do the blacksmith work for the town for ten years." On these terms the first smith cast in his lot with the farmers and carpenters of Pennycook.

The new sawmill supplied convenient lumber. The settlers were not slow to avail themselves of this advantage in repairing their meeting-house, and providing it with "a floor of planks or boards." The mention of this improvement suggests the more important fact that soon the pulpit of that modest edifice was to be occupied by a settled "orthodox minister." On the last day of March, 1730, the settlers reappointed the committee of seven, selected in June of the preceding year, and instructed it "to agree with the Rev. Mr. Timothy Walker, in order to his carrying on the work of the ministry in PennyCook for the year ensuing, and to treat with" him "in order to his settlement" in that "work." At the same time provision was made for "a speedy" additional "repairing of the house of worship." Six months later, "the General Court's committee" notified "the proprietors and grantees to assemble at the meeting-house" in "PennyCook, on the fourteenth day of October," and "then and there to choose a minister," fix the terms of settlement, and arrange "for his ordination." At the meeting held in accordance with this order, it

¹ See note at close of chapter.

² Bouton's Concord, 545.

³ Annals of Concord, 11 (note); Bouton's Concord, 93.

was "voted by the admitted settlers, that they" would "have a minister"; that "the Rev. Mr. Timothy Walker" should "be the minister of the town"; that the committee of seven should "agree with" him "upon terms" of settlement; that he should "have one hundred pounds for the year ensuing"—this to "rise forty shillings per annum till" coming "to one hundred and twenty pounds,"¹ which should "be the stated sum annually for his salary"; that "salary" should "be paid in whatever" should "be the medium of trade, for the time being, in" the "province, at silver seventeen shillings per ounce"; and, finally, that "the one hundred pounds formerly voted, to enable the minister to build a house" should "be paid in eighteen months' time." These stipulations were rounded off with the careful proviso, "that if Mr. Walker, by extreme old age," should "be disabled from carrying on the whole work of the ministry, he" should abate so much of his salary as "should be rational." A committee was then selected, consisting of "Deacon John Osgood, Mr. John Pecker, Mr. Benjamin Nichols, and Mr. Ebenezer Eastman, to discourse with Mr. Walker about the time of his ordination, and to appoint the day; also to request" such churches as they "might think proper, to send their ministers and messengers to assist in" the services, the committee being authorized "to appoint suitable entertainment" for the guests.

Mr. Walker having formally accepted, by letter, "the invitation to settle in the ministry," his ordination occurred on the 18th of November, 1730. As to this important event in the history of the new settlement, present information is but meager. No tradition describes that earnest assemblage of strong-hearted pioneers, the early men and women of Penacook, gathered, with their guests, in the humble church on the cleared rim of the leafless forest of that November day. Something is known of the services of the impressive occasion, though of the visitants, present on invitation, the names of only three,—ministers of Massachusetts churches,—have been preserved. These, John Barnard of North Andover, Samuel Phillips¹ of South Andover, and John Brown of Haverhill, were of the council, if not its sole constituents. The charge was given by Mr. Phillips; the right hand of fellowship by Mr. Brown. The sermon was preached by Mr. Barnard, and in this the preacher urged the people "always . . . to rejoice and strengthen the hands of their minister by their concord"—words which embodied an appeal not unheeded in the coming years, while, by pleasant accident, they included the future permanent name of the settlement. On that occasion, too, the first church in Penacook was organized, with eight members,

¹ See note at close of chapter.